Destinations

FOOD

Wines, cheeses, and . . . tax relief?

APRIL 11-15
BLOWING ROCK, N.C.
Blue Ridge Wine and Food Festival: Our favorite event is Thursday's "Uncork the Festival" wine and food tasting to benefit Wine to Water, a nonprofit organization devoted to bringing clean drinking water to developing nations. Our next favorite event is "Grillin' & Chillin' " on Friday, which pairs North Carolina wines and craft beers with barbecued chicken and a whole hog — all to a blues soundtrack. Seminars, cooking classes, winemakers' dinners in area restaurants, and a grand tasting of local, domestic, and international wines help to round out the long weekend. Various locations, tickets $20-$125. *877-295-7965, www.blueridgewinefestival.com*

MARCH 23-25
PETALUMA, Calif.
California's Artisan Cheese Festival: Tickets are selling fast for this sixth annual event that celebrates artisan cheese, along with other handcrafted foods that complement it so well. You can attend a wine and cheese pairing seminar or a dinner that mates cheese-inspired dishes with craft brews. At Saturday's Grand Tasting, chefs from about 20 restaurants will vie for the award for Best Artisan Cheese Creation. If you feel truly inspired, seminars will take you through the steps of making Italian cheeses such as ricotta and mozzarella or fresh cultured cow's and goat's milk cheeses. Sunday's brunch features the inspired pairing of cheese, sparkling wine, and bacon. Sheraton Sonoma County, 745 Baywood Drive, and other locations. $45-$135. *www.artisancheesefestival.com*

MARCH 25
EUNICE, La.
World's Championship Crawfish Etouffee Cook-off: With its preponderance of Cajun musicians and cooks, Eunice calls itself "Louisiana's Prairie Cajun Capital." It's also a top crawfish-producing area and brings it all together in this lively community event. While Cajun and Zydeco bands perform, about 100 teams prepare their version of crawfish etouffee, a dish of crawfish tails smothered in the cook's choice of liquid and seasonings and then served over rice. Once the judging is completed, spectators are welcome to sample to their heart's content. For those who crave the complete experience, boiled crawfish are also available to peel and eat. Northwest Pavilion, 651 Samuel Drive, food samples start at $2. *337-457-2565, www.eunice-la.com*

BLUE RIDGE WINE AND FOOD FESTIVAL/FILE

A chef prepares tasting plates at the Blue Ridge Wine and Food Festival in Blowing Rock, N.C.

APRIL 20-22
TEMPLETON, Calif.
Earth Day Food & Wine Festival: We can't think of a better way to celebrate Earth Day than to assemble a picnic at the Templeton Farmers Market and then spread it out under an apple tree at Windrose Farm. After lunch, you can admire the spring lambs or play a game of horseshoes. If your taste runs to something more elaborate, this celebration of the bounty of California's central coast has plenty to offer from a farm-to-fork dinner to a "Tax Relief" meal of alcohol-infused dishes. The centerpiece event at Pomar Junction Vineyard & Winery features more than 200 purveyors of sustainably produced foods and wines, and a variety of dishes made with local fruits, vegetables, meats, and cheeses. Pomar Junction Vineyard & Winery, 5036 South El Pomar Road and other locations, $15-$175, some events free. *www.earthdayfoodandwine.com*

PLAN AHEAD

APRIL 28
TEMPE, Ariz.
My Nana's Best Tasting Salsa Challenge: About 3,000 pounds of tortilla chips are consumed in one afternoon as more than 80 competitors whip up their best mild or hot salsa. Adults can also check out the Cazadores Margarita Mix-Off and even bid on the best margaritas made by local bartenders. A Funzone keeps the kids busy with games and other activities, while everyone enjoys the live music. Proceeds benefit the Arizona Hemophilia Association. Tempe Beach Park, $8. *888-754-7017, www.salsachallenge.com*

PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online. Patricia Harris and David Lyon can be reached at harris.lyon@verizon.net. Read their food and travel blog at www.hungrytravelers.com.

WALK TO THE SEA

Glennie Polynice, a student at Suffolk University, uses her iPhone to take the virtual Boston tour Walk to the Sea.

Currents

Handheld tour guide State House to seaside

Explore four centuries of Boston history on the self-guided Norman B. Leventhal Walk to the Sea, and learn more about each of the walk's eight highlights using a new virtual tour. The one-mile walk begins at the Massachusetts State House on Beacon Hill, ends at Long Wharf, and along the way visits such notable stops as the Old State House, Custom House, and Rose Kennedy Greenway. Each site provides images, maps, and a brief history of the location's significance. Access the free virtual tour on your wireless device or phone, and you can view additional maps and historical photographs while listening to recordings of how local events shaped that site. *617-457-0489, www.walktothesea.com*

LEGOLAND Atlanta

Atlanta has built a mini city of bricks: the new LEGOLAND Discovery Center, which opens March 17. The 35,000-foot center will have interactive LEGO stations for all ages, including an exhibit with larger, softer bricks for smaller children. Go on a LEGO Factory tour and learn how the plastic bricks are made, visit Miniland where 3 million LEGO bricks re-create downtown Atlanta attractions, or visit the LEGO fire academy, where you can tackle a jungle gym, climbing wall, and slide to test your prowess as a firefighter. Then experience wind, rain, and snow bursts in the 4-D movie theater. Buy tickets online for discounts and guaranteed admission times. *404-848-9252, atlanta.legolandiscoverycenter.com/atlanta*

Wheelchair for trekking

Physically challenged travelers can now access Italy's top sites, like the Roman Forum and Pompeii, thanks to a new trekking wheelchair that can handle all types of terrain. The unique chair, provided by Rome and Italy Tourist Services, has a seat, a frame, and one wheel, and two arms in the front and in the back that support the chair when it is stopped and that enable it to be steered by two trained guides. It offers 360-degree maneuverability around obstacles such as stones and holes, and shock absorbers that dampen the ride along the country's ancient streets. A chair can be booked for a single trip, year-round. Minimal rental: about $397 for a three-hour tour; includes two assistants to carry the chair. *011-39-06-44258441, www.romeanditaly.com*

KARI BODNARCHUK